

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

May 14, 2003

LB 408

groups came before the Appropriations Committee and said, we'll take our 10 percent, we know things are terrible. And I was really amazed at how many outside aid programs that we did hear that. We'll take our 10 percent, and we're not going to be whiners about it. And then, projects cut or delayed. Oh my goodness. You know, we're doing no capital construction. We're not fixing up our buildings. We are in...we have fire life safety issues in our state buildings. We are in a world of hurt when it comes to projects cut or delayed. Join the party. Join the party. So that was what we heard from, I assume, the people who are supporting opposing this amendment. All of these things just cross off the top. It's every aspect of government that we are in charge of, our core responsibilities. One of the things that I've used as a guiding principle during the cuts was, what can we do that we can't recover from? Those things that we shut down, we close up, the person who helps people who are hearing impaired with...in the western part of the state. The person who helps blind people. The person...the cuts in all the agencies that we're looking at. All those things, those...that we had to make decisions on, whether we're going to lay off another veterans' service officer, all those things. I worry about the capacity, and I worry about the ability to recover. And I think the place that I worry most about the ability to recover is...and do permanent damage, is higher education. But I don't think this kind of a cut does that kind of permanent damage to our ability as a state to build roads. The Highway Trust Fund has always fluctuated. And it changes with what federal money comes, with how things match up, with how you can get a project built. They can manage to this. And it's not going to shut down an industry, and it's not going to shut down road building. It's just going to delay a project or two for a couple of years, to help out with the crisis before us. I don't see a problem with that. But when we make those vertical cuts like we've been making, those agencies, those programs don't get to come back, because the people are laid off, the people aren't...the program is no longer there, the providers are no longer there. To start those things back up is going to take a lot of work. And it won't happen for years. We're making a decade's worth of changes with those kind of vertical cuts. So I say, why not let this department, just as all the other departments, share? Why should one aspect of state government